

# News

## *fire information*

Bureau of Land Management AZ      Bureau of Land Management UT  
Dixie National Forest              Zion and Bryce National Parks  
Utah, Forestry, Fire, and State Lands      Bureau of Indian Affairs

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### **Wildlife Habitat Created Through Fire**

The Hawkins and Pine Park Fires west of Enterprise, Utah, were caused by lightning and allowed to burn as “Wildland Use Fires” rather than being suppressed. There were several reasons for this decision, one being to allow the fires to burn to improve habitat for wildlife.

Much of the vegetation in the area is comprised of older stands of oak brush, bitter brush, mountain mahogany, sagebrush, pinyon and juniper. These brush species are especially important to big game, such as mule deer, because of the nutrition they offer. As these species get older, however, their nutritive values decline.

Historically, fires occurred more frequently resulting in openings of grass and brush and less pinyon and juniper. Since wildfires have been actively suppressed for the past 50 - 75 years, the pinyon and junipers have expanded greatly, eliminating valuable grasses, forbs, and brush in some instances. In recent years, the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, have been working cooperatively to reduce the amount of pinyon and juniper and to reestablish younger stands of grass and brush. These efforts are being accomplished through the use of prescribed fires, wildland use fires, and mechanized equipment.

The Hawkins and Pine Park fires burned approximately 40,000 acres, much of it in a mosaic pattern. Some areas remained unburned while others burned in varying degrees of intensity. To reduce erosion and invasion by cheatgrass, much of the fire area will be seeded with a mixture of grasses, forbs and brush. The mixture will also contain species favorable for wildlife forage.

Hunters, especially deer hunters, use the area in and around the burn heavily. In the future, hunters should see the positive results of the mosaic burn pattern, the decrease in pinyon/juniper and the flush of new growth by grasses, forbs and brush.

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